

COMMENTS AT FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF FAR-B

3-10-1987

By Waldemar Klassen

It is a great pleasure to visit with so many friends of ARS and of the Beltsville Area; and to congratulate FAR-B on its first anniversary. I have received inquiries not only from the press, but also from higher levels of the Administration and from Members of Congress concerning FAR-B and its support for programs and facilities in the Beltsville Area. Dr. Kinney has recommended that organizations similar to FAR-B be organized elsewhere in ARS.

As you know 1987 is the 100th anniversary of the Hatch Act which established the State Agricultural Experiment Stations. The first Director of the Office of Experiment Stations, the forerunner of CSRS, was Dr. Wilbur Olin Atwater. I mention Dr. Atwater because he was the founder of the first federally funded human nutrition research team. The direct descendant of the Atwater team is now known as the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center. Atwater's human nutrition research team was first established in Middleport, Connecticut, then moved to Washington, D.C. and finally to Beltsville.

1987 is the 125th anniversary of the United States Department of Agriculture. The fact that the Congress and President Lincoln took the time in the midst of the Civil War to establish the USDA is convincing evidence that an abundant and safe supply of food is first among our hierarchical needs.

1987 is the 77th anniversary of USDA research at Beltsville. Research began in 1910 when the Bureau of Animal Industry purchased a 475 acre farm; and began to conduct research on dairying and animal husbandry. Soils and crops research at Beltsville began several decades later. From 1900 until 1940, the principal USDA location for crop science research had been the Arlington Farm; the present site of the Pentagon.

With the rise in international tensions after WW I, the War Department began to press the USDA for the return of the Arlington Farm. In 1937 over 7000 acres were transferred from the Farm Security Administration to the Beltsville Research Center; and the crops research facilities and programs were transferred from Arlington to Beltsville. Also the animal disease research had been transferred from Bethesda to Beltsville. Other agencies also transferred programs to Beltsville; so that today 18 federal agencies have programs at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.

In 1935 Secretary Henry A. Wallace outlined his strategic plan for the USDA's inhouse research as follows: 1) Beltsville was to be the premier location with a strong research program, 2) USDA research at other locations was to be coordinated from Beltsville, and 3) Beltsville was to be a showcase for agricultural research open to all visitors.

-NOTE: FAR-B is the Friends of Agricultural Research-Beltsville, Inc.

For at least 3 decades the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center was indisputably the leading Center in the world. As late as 1962 fully 25% of the research effort of ARS was located at Beltsville. Now only 16% remains. Between 1960 -1985 inclusive ARS received \$243 million in appropriations to construct new facilities; Beltsville's share of this amount was \$7.96 million or 3.28 percent. Perhaps one of the lowest points in Beltsville's history occurred on February 25, 1982 when David Stockman, Director of OMB proposed to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs that the Congress consider approving the sale of all of the Beltsville Center for commercial development.

Fortunately the Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board responded by asserting to Secretary Block and to the Congress that "We believe the Center must be reestablished as a high powered agricultural research center working in the forefront of agricultural production and natural resource problems". Finally in 1985 and again in 1986, the House Appropriations Committee issued a directive to the Department to keep the Congress "fully informed as it works to restore and upgrade the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center."

In response to this Congressional Directive, we developed an 8-year plan, Renaissance 93. Renaissance 93 is a plan to restore and upgrade the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center by the end of Fiscal Year 1993. Incidentally 1993 is one year after the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

Renaissance 93 will cost 162 million dollars over 8 years. One-half of this cost is for badly needed repair and maintenance, energy retrofit, renovation of facilities, and new scientific equipment. The other half is for new construction.

Examples of proposed new construction include:

A Product Quality and Exports Research Laboratory

A World Class Greenhouse and Plant Growth Chamber Facility

An Ultraclean Small Animal Research Facility for Human Nutrition Research

Various poultry, swine and dairy facilities

A Plant Germplasm Introduction Facility, and

An Exotic Pest Quarantine Research Facility.

Dr. Kinney has been very supportive of Renaissance 93.

In FY 1986 ARS allocated \$8.5 million of base funds for Renaissance 93 objectives. Dr. Kinney undertook the complete renovation of Building 006 into a modern facility for research on plant molecular genetics. Some of you may remember B-006 as the building where Dr Borthwick and Hendricks discovered phytochrome and where much of our seed research was conducted. Also Dr. Kinney funded the construction of a Gene Transfer Laboratory for genetic engineering research of livestock; and the construction of a Small Animal Facility for Parasitology research.

In FY 1987, the current fiscal year, Dr. Kinney has given us permission to allocate \$4.8 million of base funds to Renaissance 93 objectives. In addition the Congress appropriated \$1 million to accelerate our efforts. With this million dollars, we will complete the construction of the large animal metabolism facility that Dr. Gus Hanson initiated 9 years ago. Also we will renovate one greenhouse for research on floral and nursery crops; and we will procure one growth chamber for plant physiology research.

I feel that Beltsville is at a critical juncture. Thanks to Dr. Kinney, the Maryland Congressional Delegation and the House Appropriations Committee, Renaissance 93 is on the National agenda. Appropriations of \$20-\$30 million per year will be needed if the plan is to be accomplished by the end of FY 1993. Clearly Congressional action in the next few years will decide whether Beltsville will again become the pre-eminent Center in the world for making major contributions to meeting key problems of food and agriculture - or whether David Stockman's view will prevail and put an end to this fruitful source of progress and well-being.

Now I wish to inform you of a few other developments. We have permitted use of 200 acres of land at the Hayden Farm to the University of Maryland. As you know the University sold its Plant Science Farm on Cherry Hill Road, and needs land close to the College Park Campus. The University is well along in erecting grain storage facilities, equipment, fertilizer and seed storage facilities, and in converting some old barns into shops. The Hayden Farm is located near the intersection of Beaverdam and Springfield roads.

Also we have designated 500 acres of land at Beltsville for use by the U.S. National Arboretum. Most of the land at the National Arboretum is used for special gardens and collections. During the next few years the Glenn Dale facility will become a research Annex to the U.S. National Arboretum. We are moving toward the consolidation of our plant introduction activities with the APHIS quarantine facility near the airstrip just east of Springfield road.

We have explored the possibility of establishing a Food Research Institute at Beltsville. This was to be a joint venture with the University of Maryland, and various private companies; and to receive funding support from the Department of Defense and other action and regulatory agencies. Dr. Kinney had authorized us to make available Building 157 for research to be conducted by this Consortium. However implementation of this plan is somewhat in doubt, because the University may not be able to meet its tentative commitment.

During the past year or so we have made some organizational realignments. As you know the 1972 Reorganization established 4 Regions and 29 Areas. In 1983 Dr. Kinney abolished the 4 Regions, reduced the number of Areas from 29 to 11, and greatly strengthened the role of the National Program Staff. Much of our engineering research at Beltsville was organized into the Sensors and Control Systems Research Institute with Dr. Glen Vanden Berg as Institute Director. Research on remote sensing, hydrology, water management and modeling was organized into the Agricultural Systems Research Institute with Dr. Steve Rawlins as Institute Director. Finally most of our research on the taxonomy of vascular plants, insects, fungi, and nematodes was organized into the Biosystematics and Beneficial Research Institute under the leadership of Dr. Lloyd Knutson.

Unfortunately time is not sufficient to discuss the numerous scientific accomplishments, the A-76 cost comparison process that could lead to contracting out our blue collar support services, and the many honors and awards bestowed on our scientists. Nevertheless, I feel that I must mention that Dr. Phil Kearney of our Pesticide Degradation Laboratory was selected as the ARS Distinguished Scientist of the Year. Dr. Ted Diener of our Microbiology and Plant Pathology Laboratory won the very prestigious Wolf Award for his discovery of viroids, a new class of disease agents. Also last May Dr. Edward F. Knippling was the first distinguished scientist to be inducted into the ARS Scientific Hall of Fame. In June another seven distinguished scientists will be inducted into the ARS Scientific Hall of Fame.

Finally I express my deep appreciation for the help that FAR-B is giving us in sponsoring the Beltsville Symposium on "Biomechanisms Regulating Growth and Development". It is a very great privilege for Dr. Finney and me to work with you. We are very grateful for your support of the programs of the Agricultural Research Service and for Beltsville as a major Federal facility.

REFERENCES:

Hedge, Marguerite. 1962. Beltsville. In U.S. Department of Agriculture Yearbook, pp. 38-44.

Kopecky, Kenneth E. 1983. A center for basic agricultural research should be established at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. Department of Political Science, Iowa State University. 33 pages.

Stockman, David. 1982. See Hearings, Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate, 97th Congress, 2nd Session. Hearings on Management of Federal Assets. February 25, 1982.

Wiser, Vivian and Wayne D. Rasmusen. 1966. Background for plenty: A National Center for Agricultural Research. Maryland Historical Magazine, 61: 283-304.

ADDENDUM: Construction of facilities 1960 - 1985 inclusive.

Total funds specially appropriated for new construction in ARS during 1960 to 1985 inclusive.....\$242,653,000.

Portion of these funds appropriated for new construction at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center.....\$7,962,000.

Percent for B.A.R.C.....3.28 percent.

HISTORY OF NEW CONSTRUCTION AT BELTSVILLE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTER:

<u>Purpose--</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1. Modernization of heating, water and electrical facilities.	1963 Construction	\$ 160,000.
2. Pesticide registration activities.	1965 Plans	\$ 100,000.
3. Construction, alteration and improvement facilities at the Agricultural Research Center.	1966 Construction	\$ 339,000.
4. Bioscience Building: research on plant diseases, nematodes and insects.	1965 Plans 1968 Construction	\$ 338,000. \$2,500,000.
5. Ornamental plants research: modernization of greenhouse.	1967 Construction	\$ 250,000.
6. Electrical substation and central incinerator.	1970 Construction	\$ 525,000.
7. Sewage treatment facilities	1975 Construction 1976 Construction Subtotal	\$1,400,000. \$2,350,000. \$3,750,000.
TOTAL.....		\$7,962,000.

Sources:

1. Memo with enclosure of Sept.22, 1980 from P.A. Putnam to Joseph Garbarino:Information on Construction Agricultural Research Facilities.
2. House Hearings on Appropriations for 1986. Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies: PART 7. Agricultural Research Service. Pages 259 - 265.

